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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 005964

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [CY](#) [IZ](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S NSC SEC GEN TAKES CONSERVATIVE APPROACH ON
IRAQ/CYPRUS WITH AMBASSADOR

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric A. Edelman. Reason: 1.5
(b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: During their initial meeting on the eve of the September 19 NSC meeting that would consider a troop contribution to the stabilization force in Iraq, new NSC Secretary General General Sukru Sariisik revealed little to

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the Ambassador of what would occur at the meeting. He noted that the decision on a contribution was the National Assembly's to make, and that there would be no decision before that body reconvened. The Ambassador refuted Sariisik's statement that the USG had done little to address Turkey's PKK/KADEK problem, eliciting the general's acknowledgment that our forces in Iraq were busy and "must do many things." Regarding Cyprus, Sariisik, a former commander of Turkish forces on the island, alleged Athens and Nicosia were attempting to influence the northern Cypriot elections in December. Finally, Sariisik asserted that the NSC's functions need not change to comply with EU requirements, all NSC activities were already governed by domestic laws and regulations and were "consistent with the EU." End summary.

Iraq: No Quick Decisions

2. (C) The Ambassador paid an initial call on NSC Secretary General Sukru Sariisik on September 18. (Note: This was a day before the September NSC meeting where possible troop contribution to the Iraq Stabilization Force was a major agenda item. End note.)

3. (C) Sariisik noted that the NSC was prepared to support all forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation based on principles established by the Turkish General Staff, and would discuss Iraq the following day.

4. (C) Sariisik sidestepped the Ambassador's question about the timeline for a GOT decision on a troop contribution to Iraq. He said that the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) would make the decision, and it would reconvene soon (Sept 29). There was no reason to decide before then, he said. He confirmed that the PKK/KADEK presence was "of great importance," and suggested that this could be an obstacle for greater Turkish involvement in Iraq. "This is a primary issue for us." He hoped that this problem would be eliminated as quickly as possible. (The Ambassador outlined our past cooperation, US policy and the process we have launched for responding to PKK/KADEK presence in Iraq.) Still, he accepted the Ambassador's argument that Iraq's future was important for Turkey. Although Ankara continued to have concerns about the role of Barzani and Talibani in a future government, Sariisik said "Turkey is ready to shoulder its responsibility as an ally", while reiterating the decision was the TGNA's to make.

Other Issues

5. (C) Cyprus: The Ambassador expressed our hope for a solution in Cyprus and recalled our recent demarches that both sides avoid the annual fall exercises this year. Sariisik, a former commander of Turkish forces in Cyprus, provided a fairly standard recitation of the history of Cyprus since 1974. He alleged that Athens, Nicosia and the EU were attempting to influence the outcome of northern Cyprus' December elections. Nonetheless, he called for all parties to control their emotions and for the elections to occur "naturally."

6. (C) NSC Reform: In response to a question, Sariisik denied that the NSC was being reformed to accord with EU harmonization requirements. "All of our activities are limited by law and regulation, which is consistent with the EU."

Comment: Only the Party Line

17. (C) Comment: Sariisik, although not speaking from notes, revealed nothing new or different during this meeting.

His refrain on the PKK/KADEK presence in northern Iraq is consistent with other interlocutors' and underscores once again how this issue is entwined with Turkish thinking on Iraq and its relations with the US. End comment.

EDELMAN